

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5634

As Reported by House Committee On: Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to clarifying the department of natural resources' authority to enter into cooperative agreements.

Brief Description: Clarifying the department of natural resources' authority to enter into cooperative agreements.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Rolfes, Hargrove, Nelson, Kline, Fain, Hobbs, Fraser, Parlette and Pearson; by request of Department of Natural Resources).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/14/13, 3/20/13 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Provides the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with the express authority to enter into agreements with certain non-state entities to assist the DNR with implementing its multiple use mandates, compliance with local ordinances, and the fostering of aquatic lands uses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Lytton, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Dunshee, Haigh, Hurst, Kretz, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Schmick, Stanford and Warnick.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages nearly 3 million acres of uplands and over 2 million acres of aquatic lands. Although each of the individual land holdings are

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managed by the DNR for a specific benefit or purpose, the concept of multiple use management overlays all of the DNR-managed land.

The idea of "multiple use" means the provision of several uses simultaneously on the same tract of land. Outdoor recreation, in all of its various forms, is one of the multiple uses that the DNR is directed to provide when the recreation does not negatively impact the underlying land management purposes. Many lands managed by the DNR are used for hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and motorized vehicle riding.

In implementing the multiple use mandates, the DNR is authorized to plan, construct, and operate recreational areas, trails, and facilities for educational, scientific, or experimental purposes. These activities may be carried out in conjunction with any other public or private agency. The DNR may enter into contracts, leases, or other agreements as necessary to implement its various mandates.

Summary of Bill:

The DNR is given the express authority to enter into agreements with certain non-state entities to assist the DNR with implementing its multiple use mandates, compliance with local ordinances, and the fostering of aquatic land uses. All agreements must be consistent with the land management obligations of the DNR.

The DNR may enter into these cooperative agreements with individuals and certain nonprofit organizations or other volunteer groups. These organizations include those registered under section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code, other nonprofit groups organized for the public benefit, and groups comprised of volunteers.

The DNR may utilize the services of these groups to plan, construct, and operate recreational areas, trails, and facilities for educational, scientific, or experimental purposes, or for other purposes which provide a benefit to lands managed by the DNR. These other purposes may include:

- utilizing state lands for watershed purposes;
- carrying out restoration and enhancement projects;
- enhancing watershed conditions; and
- providing vegetation management, including the removal of nonnative vegetation.

The DNR may receive gifts of personal property, services, or other items of value to help fund their various mandates and as consideration for entering into a cooperative agreement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The DNR has significant work it needs to accomplish on state lands, and cooperative agreements will give the agency an additional tool with which to do the work. The bill ensures that the DNR will have no conflicts with its trust mandates and simply allows the agency do more work for less money.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Randy Acker, Department of Natural Resources.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.